

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-47 (canceled)

Claim 48 (original): A lithography system used in a clean room comprising:

an exposure apparatus that is provided on a floor surface of said clean room and transfers a pattern of a mask onto a substrate through a projection optical system;

a substrate-processing unit that is arranged on the front side of said exposure apparatus on said floor surface and is connected in-line with said exposure apparatus, said front side being seen in a longitudinal direction of said exposure apparatus; and

a first ceiling-transport system that moves along a first rail extending in a predetermined direction on a ceiling of said clean room, and

wherein between an optical axis of said projection optical system and said substrate-processing unit, a delivery port is arranged into and from which said mask contained in a mask container is loaded and unloaded by said first ceiling-transport system.

Claim 49 (original): A lithography system according to claim 48, further comprising:

a second ceiling-transport system that moves along a second rail extending parallel to said first rail on said ceiling and transports said substrate contained in a substrate container from and to said substrate-processing unit.

Claim 50 (original): A lithography system according to claim 49, wherein said first and second rails extend in a direction substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of said exposure apparatus.

Claim 51 (original): A lithography system according to claim 50, wherein at least two mask containers that are the same as said mask container can be placed in-line along said first rail in said delivery port.

Claim 52 (original): A lithography system according to claim 49, wherein said substrate container is a sealed-type container having a lid that can be opened and closed.

Claim 53 (original): A lithography system according to claim 48, wherein maintenance of said exposure apparatus can be performed from at least both sides thereof.

Claim 54 (original): A lithography system according to claim 48, further comprising:
an inline-interface portion that is arranged between said exposure apparatus and said substrate-processing unit and that connects the both.

Claim 55 (original): A lithography system according to claim 54, further comprising:
a mask-transport-system housing that is arranged parallel to said inline-interface portion and has said mask-transport system therein, and
wherein said delivery port is arranged on the ceiling of a mask-transport-system housing.

Claim 56 (original): A lithography system according to claim 55, wherein said first rail extends in a direction substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of said exposure apparatus, and

wherein at least two mask containers that are the same as said mask container can be placed in-line along said first rail in said delivery port.

Claim 57 (original): A lithography system according to claim 55, wherein one side of said mask-transport-system housing is in the substantially same plane as one side of said exposure apparatus is, and wherein a in-out port for said mask container is provided in said one side of said mask-transport-system housing.

Claim 58 (original): A lithography system according to claim 55, further comprising:

a substrate-container-extension housing that is arranged adjacent to said mask-transport-system housing and parallel to said inline-interface portion and has an extension port for a substrate container containing said substrate.

Claim 59 (original): A lithography system according to claim 58, wherein one side of said substrate-container-extension housing is in the substantially same plane as one side of said exposure apparatus and one side of said mask-transport-system housing are, wherein an extension port for said substrate container is provided in said one side of said substrate-container-extension housing, and wherein an in-out port for said mask container is provided in said one side of said mask-transport-system housing.

Claim 60 (original): A lithography system according to claim 59, wherein said extension port and said in-out port are arranged at the same predetermined height from a floor surface.

Claim 61 (original): A lithography system according to claim 55, wherein said mask-transport system inside said mask-transport-system housing transports said mask container that was carried in by said first ceiling-transport system between said delivery port and said position in which to deliver a mask to a conveying system of said exposure apparatus side, further comprising:

an orientation-change unit that changes the orientation of said mask container to be suitable to deliver a mask to said conveying system of said exposure apparatus side in said delivery position before the transport of said mask container to said delivery position.

Claim 62 (original): A lithography system according to claim 61, wherein said orientation-change unit changes the orientation of said mask container during transport by said first ceiling-transport system.

Claim 63 (original): A lithography system according to claim 61, wherein said orientation-change unit changes the orientation of said mask container while said mask is transported by a conveying system in said mask-transport-system housing.

Claim 64 (original): A lithography system according to claim 55, wherein said mask-transport-system housing is detachable.

Claim 65 (original): A lithography system according to claim 54, further comprising:
a substrate-container-extension housing that is arranged parallel to said inline-interface portion and has an extension port for a substrate container containing said substrate.

Claim 66 (original): A lithography system according to claim 65, wherein one side of said substrate-container-extension housing is in the substantially same plane as one side of said exposure apparatus is, and wherein an extension port for said substrate container is provided in said one side of said substrate-container-extension housing.

Claim 67 (original): A lithography system according to claim 66, wherein an in-out port for said mask container is provided on said one side of said exposure apparatus.

Claim 68 (original): A lithography system according to claim 67, wherein said extension port and said in-out port are arranged at the same predetermined height from a floor surface.

Claim 69 (original): A lithography system according to claim 65, wherein said substrate-container-extension housing is detachable.

Claim 70 (original): A lithography system according to claim 54, wherein said inline-interface portion is detachable.

Claim 71 (original): A lithography system according to claim 48, wherein a laser unit as an exposure light source is connected to an end surface of said exposure apparatus reverse to said front surface to which said substrate-processing unit is connected.

Claim 72 (original): A lithography system according to claim 71, wherein said laser unit is attended by an illumination optical system.

Claim 73 (original): A lithography system according to claim 48, wherein said delivery port is arranged at a height of about 900mm from a floor surface.

Claim 74 (original): A lithography system according to claim 48, wherein said mask container is a sealed-type container having a lid that can be opened and closed.

Claim 75 (original): A lithography system according to claim 74, wherein said mask container is a bottom-open-type and sealed-type container.

Claim 76 (original): A device manufacturing method including a lithography process, wherein in said lithography process, a lithography system according to claim 48 is used.

Claims 77-99 (canceled)

Claim 100 (original): A lithography system used in a clean room comprising:
a plurality of exposure apparatuses that are provided on a floor surface of said clean room and transfer a pattern of a mask onto a substrate through a projection optical system;
a ceiling-transport system that moves along a rail extending on the ceiling of said clean room and transports said mask contained in a mask container; and
an orientation-setting mechanism that is provided on said ceiling-transport system, and, before carrying into each of said exposure apparatuses, sets the orientation of said mask container to be suitable for said exposure apparatus.

Claim 101 (original): A lithography system according to claim 100, wherein said orientation-setting mechanism sets the orientation of said mask container based on information, stored beforehand, concerning orientation suitable for each exposure apparatus.

Claim 102 (original): A lithography system according to claim 100, wherein said orientation-setting mechanism sets the orientation of said mask container according to an instruction from a host unit.

Claim 103 (original): A lithography system according to claim 100, wherein said orientation-setting mechanism sets the orientation of said mask container based on communication results with each of said exposure apparatus.

Claim 104 (original): A lithography system according to claim 100, wherein said mask container has an opening, and said orientation-setting mechanism sets the orientation of said mask container according to the direction of said opening.

Claim 105 (original): A lithography system according to claim 104, wherein said mask container has a lid that can close said opening.

Claim 106 (withdrawn): A transport method with which to transport a container containing an object to be conveyed from a first position to a second position in which said object to be conveyed is delivered,

wherein during said transport, the orientation of said container is set according to a direction in which said object is delivered in said second position.

Claim 107 (withdrawn): A transport method according to claim 106, wherein said object to be conveyed is a mask having a pattern formed thereon.

Claim 108 (withdrawn): A transport method according to claim 106, wherein said object to be conveyed is a substrate subject to exposure onto which a predetermined pattern is transferred.

Claim 109 (withdrawn): A transport method according to claim 106, wherein said container has an opening, and the orientation of said container is set according to the direction of said opening.

Claim 110 (withdrawn): A transport method according to claim 109, wherein said container has a lid that can close said opening.

Claims 111-115 (canceled)

Claim 116 (withdrawn): A transport method with which to transport a container containing an object to be conveyed from a first position apart from an exposure-apparatus main body to a second position in which said object to be conveyed is delivered,

wherein during said transport, the orientation of said container is set according to a direction in which said object is delivered in said second position.

Claim 117 (withdrawn): A transport method according to claim 116, wherein an operator carries a container containing said object to be conveyed from said first position to said second position.

Claim 118 (withdrawn): A transport method according to claim 116, wherein a transport mechanism transports a container containing said object to be conveyed from said first position to said second position.

Claim 119 (withdrawn): A transport method according to claim 116, wherein said mask container has an opening, and said orientation-change unit changes the orientation of said mask container according to the direction of said opening.

Claim 120 (withdrawn): A transport method according to claim 119, wherein said mask container has a lid that can close said opening.

Claim 121 (new): A lithography system comprising:

an exposure-apparatus main body that is arranged in a chamber that can be provided on a floor surface, and exposes a substrate with exposure beam corresponding to a pattern of a mask;

a beam generating unit that is arranged on said floor surface a predetermined distance apart from said chamber of said exposure-apparatus main body and generates said exposure beam; and

an optical connection unit that optically connects said exposure-apparatus main body and said beam generating unit; wherein

both said exposures-apparatus main body and said beam generating unit are constituted so that maintenance can be performed from an area formed in between said chamber of said exposure-apparatus main body and said beam generating unit, and

said optical connection unit is excluded from the area formed in between said chamber of said exposure-apparatus main body and said beam generating unit by arranging said optical connection unit below the floor surface where said exposure-apparatus main body and said beam generating unit are provided.

Claim 122 (new): An exposure apparatus that is arranged in a chamber that can be provided on a floor surface, and exposes a substrate with exposure beam corresponding to a pattern of a mask, said exposure apparatus comprising:

an exposure-apparatus main body to which said exposure beam is supplied via an optical connection unit arranged below said floor surface from a beam generating unit that is arranged a predetermined distance apart from said chamber on said floor surface and generates said exposure beam, wherein

said exposure-apparatus main body is constituted so that maintenance can be performed from an area formed in between said chamber and said beam generating unit.

Claim 123 (new): An exposure apparatus comprising:

an exposure-apparatus main body that is arranged in a chamber, illuminates a mask on a mask stage with illumination beam irradiated from an illumination system provided on one

end side of an upper portion in said chamber, and exposes a substrate with exposure beam corresponding to a pattern formed on said mask;

a mask container delivery port on which a mask container capable of containing a plurality of masks can be provided; and

a mask transport system that is arranged on the other end side of an upper portion in said chamber opposite to said one end side on which said illumination system is provided, and transports a mask in said mask container onto said mask stage.

Claim 124 (new): An exposure apparatus according to claim 123, wherein said mask container is a sealed-type container.

Claim 125 (new): An exposure apparatus according to claim 123, said apparatus further comprising:

a container transport system that transports said mask container to and from said mask container delivery port, wherein

said container transport system comprises a rail extending on a ceiling of a clean room where the chamber of said exposure-apparatus main body is provided, and moves along said rail holding said mask container.

Claim 126 (new): An exposure apparatus according to claim 125, wherein on said mask container delivery port not less than two mask containers can be provided in line in a direction of the rail of said container transport system.

Claim 127 (new): An exposure apparatus according to claim 126, wherein said mask container delivery port is arranged at an upper portion of a mask container housing which is provided separately from a chamber where said exposure-apparatus main body is arranged.

Claim 128 (new): A lithography system comprising:

a sealed-type substrate container that comprises a lid and is capable of containing a plurality of substrates;

an exposure-apparatus main body that comprises a container port on which said substrate container is provided, takes a substrate out of said substrate container and performs exposure processing on the substrate; and

an orientation-change unit that changes an orientation of said substrate container to an orientation suitable for said exposure-apparatus main body before said exposure-apparatus main body takes the substrate out of said substrate container.

Claim 129 (new): A lithography system according to claim 128, said system further comprising:

a housing capable of storing a plurality of said substrate containers, wherein said orientation-change unit is arranged in said housing.

Claim 130 (new): A lithography system according to claim 128, said system further comprising:

a housing capable of storing a plurality of said substrate containers; and
a container transport system that transports said substrate container containing a plurality of substrates with respect to said housing, wherein
said container port is a delivery port to be used for delivering said substrate container with respect to said container transport system on an outer surface of said housing, and
said orientation-change unit is arranged on said delivery port.

Claim 131 (new): A lithography system according to claim 128, said system further comprising:

a ceiling-transport system that includes a rail extending on a ceiling of a clean room where said exposure-apparatus main body is provided, and transports said substrate container containing a plurality of substrates, wherein

said orientation-change unit is arranged at said ceiling-transport system.

Claim 132 (new): A lithography system according to claim 128, wherein

said orientation-change unit changes an orientation of said substrate container in accordance with an orientation of an opening that is opened and closed with the lid of said substrate container.

Claim 133 (new): A lithography system according to claim 128, said system further comprising:

an orientation-detection unit that detects an orientation of said substrate container, wherein

said orientation-change unit controls the orientation of said substrate container based on the orientation of said substrate container detected by said orientation-detection unit.

Claim 134 (new): A lithography system comprising:

a sealed-type substrate container that comprises a lid and is capable of containing a plurality of substrates;

a plurality of exposure-apparatus main bodies that are arranged on a floor surface of a clean room, each of said exposure-apparatus main bodies comprising a container port on which said substrate container is provided, taking a substrate out of said substrate container and performing exposure processing on the substrate;

a container transport system that transports said substrate container containing a plurality of substrates with respect to said container port; and

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an orientation-change unit that changes an orientation of said substrate container to an orientation suitable for each of said plurality of exposure-apparatus main bodies.